



Release date: November 21, 2000

For more information contact: Hope Williams

Phone: (202) 586-5806

Energy Department Announces Preferred Alternative for Nuclear Infrastructure

The Department of Energy today announced its preferred alternative for the Final Nuclear Infrastructure Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (NI-PEIS) which will be formally issued to the public in mid-December. The NI-PEIS was developed to help the department prepare for future missions, including nuclear technology research & development, medical isotope production, and production of Pu-238 to support future U.S. space exploration. A record of decision will be issued in January 2001.

"The department remains committed to its core nuclear science and technology role," said Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson. "Using our current facilities, we expect to meet the nation's foreseeable needs for years to come."

The department's preferred alternative consists of the following three major components:

- The department will use its existing facilities to the extent possible and consider opportunities to enhance its current infrastructure to maximize the agency's ability to address future mission needs.
- The department will develop a conceptual design and a research program for an Advanced Accelerator Applications facility to perform future research and testing, for which Congress has provided funding in FY 2001.
- The preferred alternative anticipates permanent deactivation of the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) at the Hanford Site, near Richland Wash. Commitments from the private and public sectors were not sufficient to justify restarting FFTF or building new facilities at this time.

The preferred alternative anticipates resumption of domestic production of Pu-238 using the Advanced Test Reactor in Idaho and the High Flux Isotope Reactor in Tennessee. The preferred alternative includes processing of the Pu-238 targets at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Moreover, the department will continue its efforts to make the current infrastructure available for medical research isotope production. The department will continue to work with the private sector to respond to emerging medical isotope needs.

###

RL 01-018

[\[Hanford Home Page\]](#) [\[Press Index\]](#)

For questions or comments about this page, please send email to michael_l_talbot@rl.gov